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INDIAN AFFAIRS SEEKS
SETTLEMENT TREATIES 8 and 11

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INDIAN AFFAIRS SEEKS SETTLEMENT TREATIES 8 AND 11

OTTAWA (June 28, 1972) - A negotiated settlement of Treaties 8 and 11 which apply to areas of northwest Canada will be sought in discussions with representatives of Indian Bands concerned, it was announced today by Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien.

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Finally, Mr. Chrétien noted that notwithstanding any of the Treaties covered by the Treaties, the Treaties involve Indians living in the northern parts of Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia; the western portion of the Northwest Territories and the southeast corner of the Yukon Territory.

In making his announcement, Mr. Chrétien also indicated his willingness to appoint a senior departmental official to conduct exploratory consultations with the various Indian Bands concerned in order to hear their views on how the approach to an agreed settlement should be made.

He further stated that Indians covered by the two Treaties would be offered the opportunity to select lands which would then be set aside as reserves within the meaning of the Indian Act; land would be on the scale provided in the Treaty and based on the 1971 census of the Bands.

Mr. Chrétien also indicated that Bands would have the option of a mutually acceptable substitute for reserve lands by fully surrendering their land rights and exchanging them in accordance with an equitable evaluation of their surface and sub-surface rights.

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Mr. Christian also indicated that Bands would have the option of a mutually acceptable substitute for reserve lands by fully surrendering their land rights and exchanging them in accordance with an equitable evaluation of their surface and sub-surface rights.

Finally, Mr. Chrétien noted that notwithstanding any other agreements as regards lands, the Indians covered by the Treaties will be offered full possession of their homesites - the land and buildings which they now occupy - and that any cash payments involved in the settlement will be subject to the provisions of the Indian Act as regards the management of monies held in trust for the use and benefit of the Indians.

Keith Johnstone
(613) 995-6386

Finally, Mr. Christie noted that notwithstanding any other agreements as regards lands, the Indians covered by the Treaties will be offered full possession of their homesteads - the land and buildings which they now occupy - and that any cash payments involved in the settlement will be subject to the provisions of the Indian Act as regards the management of monies held in trust for the use and benefit of the Indians.

- 30 -

Kelth Johnstone
(617) 925-6386

Background

Treaties 8 and 11

Treaty 8 was put forward in 1899 to Indian bands in northwestern British Columbia, and what is now Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Yukon and Northwest Territories. It was signed by various bands in the following three years.

Treaty 11 was put forward in 1921 to Indian bands in the Northwest Territories and was accepted by the bands between then and 1923.

In the Northwest Territories the following bands are signatories to Treaty 8: Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Hay River, and Snowdrift. The following N.W.T. bands are signatories to Treaty 11: Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Yellowknife, Rae-Edzo, Fort Simpson, Fort Wrigley, Fort Norman, Fort Franklin, Fort Good Hope, Arctic Red River, Fort McPherson and Aklavik. These 16 bands live in 26 communities in the Mackenzie Valley. There are 6,688 Indian people in these bands. The Rae-Edzo Band with 1,306 is the largest.

Treaty 8 calls for laying aside reserves not to exceed one square mile for each family of five who elect to reside on reserves or "for such families or to individuals Indians as may prefer to live apart from band reserves...land in severality to the extent of 160 acres to each Indian".

Treaty 11 contains an undertaking to lay aside for each band one square mile for each family of five or in that proportion for larger or smaller families.

The Indian bands affected never selected the land offered. At various times some suggested that they did not wish to live on reserves but preferred to remain on their homesites land. The Nelson Commission reviewed the treaty situation in 1959 and made various proposals but no agreement emerged.

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ABSTRACT OF RECENT STATEMENTS ON TREATIES 8 AND 11

Report by the Honourable Jean Chrétien to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development on the Government's Northern Objectives, Priorities and Strategies for the 70's - March 28, 1972.

The likelihood of pipeline construction and other major projects in the Territories has evoked understandable anxiety among the native peoples residing there. They are concerned about what they see as threats to their traditional privileges and pursuits, and about their share of the benefits from resource development. The Indians of the Northwest Territories are particularly concerned because of certain treaty undertakings about land entitlement that have yet to be fulfilled. Recognizing their growing interest in these matters, I have decided to appoint a representative of my Department's Indian program in Yellowknife. He will be a departmental representative on the ground - one with whom the Indians of the Northwest Territories will be able to deal direct.

I have assured them, as I now assure you, that the Government is very conscious of the needs and concerns of native peoples in the North. I have indicated on many occasions that we are ready to discuss their treaty claims or other grievances whenever they are ready to do so, whether they are raised with the Indian Claims Commissioner or with me. We welcome the attention that the Indian and more recently the Eskimo people are giving to these matters, which have remained in suspense for many years, largely because the parties concerned were unable to engage in serious dialogue about them.

"Northern Development for Northerners", a speech by the Honourable Jean Chrétien to the First Conference of Canadian Arctic Resource Committee, Ottawa, May 24, 1972.

It has been said that the government should no longer delay in the settlement of Treaties 8 and 11 with the Indian people of the Mackenzie Valley. These Indians did not choose land when treaties were signed. I have said before what the government's position is with respect to settling both treaties. I want to make it as clear as I can that the government respects these treaties and wishes to see the obligations under them dealt with as soon as possible.

I have met representatives of the Northwest Territories Indian Brotherhood on several occasions and told them that I am ready at any time to set down to discuss the settlement of their treaties. However, they have said that they need time to examine their case and to determine their approach to claims and treaty rights. I will not pressure them. I think it only fair to say that governments in the past may not have appeared zealous in attempts to set aside reserve lands, but the Indian people themselves have expressed some doubt about setting up reservations as has been done in other parts of the country.

.....

During the current year over \$7,000,000, compared with a few thousand dollars in 1968, will be available to Indian and Eskimo associations across the country to support them in their activities; this includes \$300,000 to assist the four northern associations.

"Plain Talk on Northern Development", a speech by the Honourable Jean Chrétien, to the Inuvik Chamber of Commerce, June 12, 1972.

I have stated before what the government's position is about Treaties 8 and 11. I want to make it clear again today that the government respects all Indian treaties and wants to see the obligations under them dealt with as soon as possible.

I have met representatives of the Northwest Territories Indian Brotherhood on several occasions and told them that I am ready at any time to sit down to discuss the settlement of their treaties. They have said that they need to examine their case and to determine their approach to claims and treaty rights. I will not pressure them.

The government fully recognizes that certain obligations incurred in some parts of the country as a result of treaties with Indians were not adequately discharged in the past. That is why we have provided over \$1 million in the past two years for research by Indian associations. An Indian Claims Commissioner has also been appointed. He knows the North well. He was a Territorial Councillor for three years.

The government is now studying requests for further research funds from the various regional Indian associations, the National Indian Brotherhood as well as Inuit Tapirisat. This is to enable them to investigate all types of claims which they feel are valid and require study, and to assist them to define their grievances, develop their claims and bring forward proposed approaches for settlement. I believe this is reasonable and sound.

Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Press Release, June 19, 1972.

The Department of Indian Affairs will take over immediately the administration of treaty payments and the issuing of hunting and fishing supplies to the 6,700 Indians living in the Northwest Territories, Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development announced today.

The territorial government at Yellowknife has been handling Treaty 8 and 11 payments for the past two years.

In his statement, Mr. Chrétien said the change was being made "because the Indian people requested it". The territorial government is in agreement with the decision, he added.

A treaty party headed by Harold Woodsworth of the Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, will leave for the territories shortly. The party will include a scarlet-uniformed R.C.M.P. officer, in the traditional manner, two officials from the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, two territorial government officials, and three other people from the department.

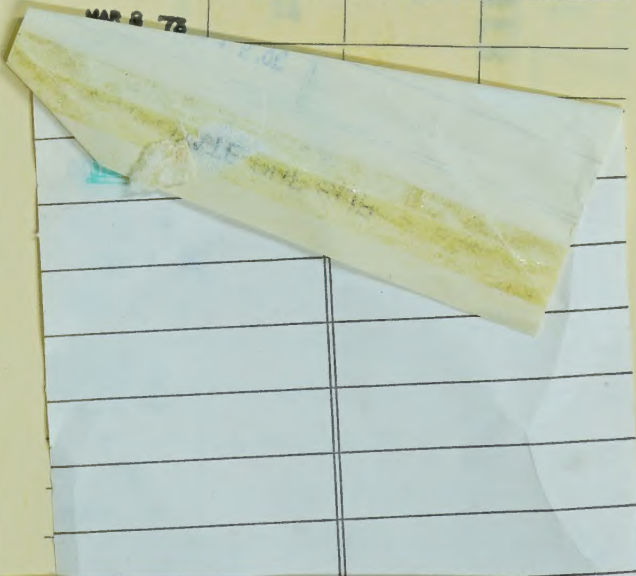
Payments will begin this week at Fort Smith. A total of 24 additional payment-stops will be made as the party moves up the MacKenzie Valley to Inuvik. Completion of payments will be accomplished by mid-July.

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